



Maricopa County

News Release

**Department of
Public Health**

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Maricopa County Reports First Human Case of West Nile Virus

Maricopa County Department of Public Health has identified the county's first locally-acquired human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in 2004. This person developed symptoms associated with WNV on May 8, 2004, and was admitted to a Valley hospital. Fortunately, the person has recovered and has been released from the hospital. A suspect case originally reported in the fall of 2003, was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this month.

In addition, Maricopa County Environmental Services Department has discovered nine WNV positive mosquito pools, three WNV infected horses, and one WNV infected bird in the Valley. People in all areas of Maricopa County should always take common sense precautions to prevent being infected with WNV.

It is important to remember that there are several measures each individual can take to prevent WNV infection:

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around the home by removing standing water in potted plants, tires and other containers.
- Repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of the home.
- Avoid outdoor activity before dawn and after dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- When outdoors wear long sleeves and long pants to prevent mosquito bites.
- When outdoors wear a mosquito repellent containing DEET (follow label instructions, especially for use on children).
- Report dead birds to local authorities.

Valuable information on mosquito reduction and avoidance, and dead bird reporting can be found at: <http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/water/vector/backyard.asp> or by calling (602) 506-6616.

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Maricopa County Department of Public Health and Maricopa County Environmental Services Department will continue working to protect the community with an enhanced surveillance program including sampling and testing of mosquitoes and dead birds, and evaluation of equine neurological illnesses and human cases of meningitis and encephalitis.

WNV was first seen in North America in 1999 in New York, and the virus has since spread rapidly westward across the country. So far this year, WNV has been identified in 10 states. Last year, WNV was identified in 46 states and the District of Columbia. It caused 9,100 human illnesses and 218 human deaths.

WNV is transmitted to humans by the bite on an infected mosquito, however less than 1 percent of all mosquitoes are infected. Approximately 20 percent of people infected with West Nile Virus will feel symptoms. Most people who experience symptoms will have:

- Fever
- Headache
- Body aches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back.

A small percentage of people who are infected with WNV will experience severe symptoms such as meningitis, encephalitis, paralysis and even death. Persons over the age of 50 are generally at a higher risk for severe symptoms.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm> or by calling 888-246-2675 (English), 888-246-2875 (Spanish), 866-874-2646 (TTY).

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